

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 39

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 41

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 39—Relative to Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 17, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 39, Alquist. Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

This measure would resolve that the month of April be designated henceforth as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

WHEREAS, The American Medical Association has stated that a “woman is raped every 46 seconds in the United States” and that sexual assault is a “silent epidemic”; and

WHEREAS, In California, there were 9,918 forcible rapes reported in 2003; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated by the Bureau of Justice Statistics that over 70 percent of rapes are never reported to police; and

WHEREAS, Sixty-seven percent of all victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies were under 18 years of age, and 34 percent of all victims were under 12 years of age; and

WHEREAS, One of every seven victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies were under six years of age, and 40 percent of the offenders who victimized children under six years of age were under 18 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Women, children, and men are all victims of sexual assault and it is estimated that one in three women, one in four girls, one in six boys, and one in 11 men will be victims at least once in their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault impacts women, children, and men of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Women, children, and men suffer multiple types of sexual violence, including acquaintance rape, stranger rape, sexual assault by an intimate partner, gang rape, incest, stalking, serial rape, ritual abuse, sexual harassment, child sexual molestation, prostitution, pornography, and stalking; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the immediate physical and emotional costs, sexual assault may also have associated severe and long-lasting consequences of posttraumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, major depression, homelessness, eating disorders, and suicide; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified sexual assault as a significant, costly, and preventable health issue; and

WHEREAS, Women, children, and men in our state have the right to be safe from sexual violence in their homes, at school, at work, and on the streets; and

WHEREAS, It is our responsibility to support rape survivors by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect; and

WHEREAS, It is crucially important to hold perpetrators responsible for sexual attacks, and to prevent sexual violence at every opportunity; and

WHEREAS, A coalition of rape crisis centers, known as the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, has emerged to directly confront this crisis with the cooperation of law enforcement agencies, churches, health care providers, and other helping professionals from California's diverse communities; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the compassion and dedication of the individuals involved in this effort, applaud their commitment, and increase public understanding of this significant problem; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the strength, courage, and challenges of the victims and survivors of sexual assault and their families and friends as they struggle to cope with the reality of sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize that not all victims of sexual assault survive, either at the time of the assault or later, due to the horrific long-term trauma that sexual assault often inflicts upon victims; and

WHEREAS, There are rape prevention and education efforts underway throughout California to challenge the societal myths and behaviors that perpetuate rape and to engage communities in a common goal of ending sexual assault; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That, henceforth, the month of April shall be designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the Governor, to the Director of the United States Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.